THE CHURCH OF ROME NO Safe Guide:

OR

Reasons to prove that no Rational man, who takes due care of his own Eternal Salvation, can give himself up unto the Conduct of that Church in matters of Religion.

By *John Owen*, D. D.

JEREM. 7. 4, 9, 10.

Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these. Will ye steal, murder, and commit Adultery, and swear falsly, and burn Incense unto Baal, and walk after other Gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house which is called by my Name?

LONDON,
Printed for *Nathaniel Ponder*, at the *Peacock* in the *Poultry*, over against the *Stocks Market*. 1679.

1679
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Imprimatur,

March 5. 1679.

PREFACE.

THE Enſuing Diſcourſe was the Subject and Subſtance of two Sermons Preached unto a Private Congregation. The Author of them had no deſign or purpoſe ever to have made them Publick. The importunity of many, who judged they might be of uſe unto others, becauſe they found them ſo unto themſelves, gave occaſion unto this Publication of them. Yet had they not ſo prevailed, but that he judged it was neither unmeet for him, nor unſeaſonable for others. In publico diſcrimine omnis homo miles eſt; No man is to be forbidden to bring his Bucket to help allay the flames of a raging Fire. And it is the Pretence of the Church of Rome to be the only Guide of all Chriſtians in Religion, which is here examined; a work which a concurrence of all ſorts of circumſtances renders ſeaſonable. For as this Pretence is the ſole Foundation of the whole Papacy, with all the Power and ſecular Advantages that it hath obtained unto it ſelf; ſo it is that alone which gives countenance and warranty unto the Factors and Agents of that Church, to deſign and perpetrate ſuch things as are deſtructive of all that is praiſe-worthy or deſireable among Man-

kind, and unſpeakably ſcandalous unto Chriſtian Religion. Remove the ſand or rubbiſh hereof, and the whole Fabrick will diſſolve of it ſelf, and fall to the ground. This ſmall Diſcourſe is an Attempt unto that end, whoſe ſucceſs is humbly recommended unto the care of God over his Church. If there ſeem to be any ſeverities of expreſſion uſed towards ſome of the Church of Rome, *the Reader is to conſider that hard things cannot well be repreſented in ſoft and pliant words. And if there be nothing of this nature found, but what hath the appearance of ſeverity, from the things themſelves which are expreſſed, there is no blameable exceſs. However the Author is one who heartily deſires and prayes for the outward Peace and Tranquility of all men in this world, whoſe Principles will allow them to live peaceably with others.*

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THE CHURCH of ROME NO SAFE GUIDE.

THE Foundation of the ſmall enſuing diſcourſe, ſhall be laid in a *Poſition*, wherein as I ſuppoſe, Perſons of all ſorts who are concerned in the things treated about, are agreed; namely, that it is *the Duty of every man who taketh care of his own eternal Salvation, to betake himſelf into ſome Guide or Conduct, that may ſafely lead him unto the Knowledge of the Truth, and the* Practice *of Chriſtian Obedience.* The Nature of Religion, the State of our own Minds in this World, with the eternal Importance of a ſafe unerring Guidance in things Spiritual and Supernatural, do require that the utmoſt of our Diligence and Prudence, be uſed in the diſcharge of this Duty, in the choice of this Guide. No man of himſelf is ſufficient by his *own Reaſon alone* to be his own Guide. They who *thinking themſelves wiſe* have attempted ſo to be, *have waxed vain in their Imaginations, and their fooliſh hearts have been darkned.* Rom. 1. 21. The warning and inſtruction given by *Solomon*, do principally reſpect this caſe; *He that truſteth in his own*

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heart is a fool; but whoso walketh wisely shall be delivered, Prov. 28. 26. But the Knowledg of, and Adherence unto such a *Guide*, are eminently necessary, when there are great *Differences* and *Divisions* amongst men about Religion; especially if they are mannaged in waies and by means not only scandalous unto Religion it self, but pernitious unto Humane Society, in their consequents. When men not only say and contend that *here is Christ, and lo there is Christ*, *Matth.* 24. 23. but also on the account of these differences ingage into waies and practices, ruinous unto the souls of men, and destructive unto all that is praise worthy in this World, those who are not careful to chuse and adhere unto a faithful Guide and conduct, are no less defective in Wisdom, than negligent in their Duty.

Were a man in a Wilderness where are a multitude of cross paths, all pretending to lead unto an inhabited City, whither he must go or perish; if he see men not only contending some for one way, some for another, but *killing* and *destroying* one another, about the preference of the several waies they esteem best and safest; he deserves to wander and perish, if he refuse a Guide that is tendred unto him with sufficient evidence of his Truth and Faithfulness. That there is such a one ready in our present case shall be immedately evinced.

The *differences in Religion* that are at present among us, are of two sorts. First, Such as comparatively are of *small moment*, as unto the principal ends of the Life of God. The measure of these differences is, that which way soever they are determined in the minds of men, they neither overthrow the Foundation, nor obstruct the due exercise of Faith and Love. For this is our great Duty, with respect unto Doctrines in Religion, that we hold *fast the form of sound words, in Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. And if any of them are so small as that it cannot be

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pretended that they overthrow the Foundations of Faith and Love, yet if they hinder them in their operations and due exerciſe according unto the Rule of the Goſpel, they are *pernicious* unto the ſouls of them in whom they have that effect. But ſuch differences which comply with this meaſure, tend unto nothing in themſelves that is obſtructive unto the Glory or Power of Religion, whatever they may be preſſed and wreſted unto, by the Luſts, Prejudices, and carnal Intereſts of men. For there is no ground to be taken from them, for *ſevere thoughts* concerning the ſtate and condition of them who ſo differ, as unto their Intereſt in preſent Grace and future Glory. To live in a neglect of Love, in all the effects and fruits of it towards ſuch on any pretences, to deſign their hurt and evil, is to live in open contradiction unto all the Rules of the Goſpel.

Such *ſevere thoughts* are the principal cauſes and occaſion of all pernicious evils in Religion; eſpecially thoſe which are moſt ſcandalous unto it; and moſt inconſiſtent with that good of Mankind, which Chriſtian Religion is deſigned to promote. For things are come to that paſs among the generality of Chriſtians, that when once Perſons begin to *damn others* in their minds for their diſſent from them, they judge themſelves at liberty, and count that it is their Duty, to do them all the miſchief they can in this World. They firſt make themſelves their *Judges* that they muſt go to Hell, and then would be their *Executioners*, to ſend them thither as faſt as they can. Whether this be a Repreſentation of *Chriſt* or of the *Devil*, is not hard to determine. Sure I am, it is not compliant with the advice given unto all Guides of the Church of an attendance whereunto they muſt give an account, 2 *Tim.* 2.24, 25, 26. *And the Servant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; In meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the*

Truth. And that they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the Devil, *who are taken captive by him at his Will.*

Hence it is that thoſe who have a ſtrong inclination to oppreſs and deſtroy other men, which their Intereſt prompts them unto, do endeavour to make every the leaſt diſſent from themſelves, on one pretence or other, by *Sophiſtical* arguments and ſtrained conſequences, to be a fundamental error, and ſuch as makes them incapable of Life eternal. But no men can give a greater evidence of their diſintreſt in Chriſtian Religion, of their unacquaintedneſs with the vertues and Powers of it, wherein the glories of it do conſiſt, and what is of real price with God, than thoſe who are ſo minded. Bleſſed be God, that Chriſt will not leave his ſeat of Judgment unto ſuch Perſons, neither here nor hereafter.

But ſuch differences as thoſe mentioned, will probably continue among Chriſtians, ſo long as they continue in this World. For although all thoſe among whom theſe differences are, do chuſe the ſame Guide, yet they do not in all things equally hear and underſtand his voice. Perfection in Light and Knowledge are required unto a perfect agreement in all the conceptions of our minds about ſpiritual things. Wherefore it is reſerved for Heaven where every thing that is *imperfect* ſhall be done away. Here we have different meaſures; We *know but in part*, and therefore *propheſy in part*, Rom. 13. 9. It is Love or Charity alone that ſupplies this defect; and gives ſuch an Harmony unto the different parts of the Myſtical Body of Chriſt, which is the Church, as renders them all uſeful, and the whole beautiful, 1 *Cor.* 13. *Col.* 3. 14.

But theſe are not the differences which at preſent I intend. There are thoſe which in their Nature are of greater Importance; ſuch as are about the Fundamentals of Chriſtian Faith, Worſhip and Obedience; ſuch as upon whoſe determination the eternal welfare and miſery of the ſouls of men do depend.

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And not only ſo, but they are ſuch alſo, which on that wretched mannagement of Religious concerns that late ages have embraced, have an influence into the Peace or Diſturbance of Humane Society, the Tranquility, the Liberty and Lives of men. Yea they are by ſome promoted and purſued, by all waies of fraud and violence, with that height of Impiety as is utterly deſtructive of all Religion. Many we have who plead themſelves to be *Chriſtians*, which might be allowed them, if they pleaſed themſelves, would they not do ſuch things as Chriſtian Religion abhorreth. But this is the leaſt part of their claim; they will alſo be the *only Chriſtians*; all others who differ from them, however falſely ſo called, being only a drove of *unbelievers*, haſting unto Hell. Now although this be intollerable preſumption, yet becauſe they hurt none by it, but themſelves, if they will not be awakened from this pleaſing dream, they may be ſuffered to ſleep on. But they reſt not here; theſe *Chriſtians* who *only are ſo*, and ſo alone know truly what is in Chriſtian Religion, will do ſuch things under a pretence of it, will perpetrate ſuch execrable crimes, avowing them to be the dictates and commands of that *Religion*, that if men were not ſure that their former pretences are preſumptuouſly falſe, it would be a ſufficient warranty for them, whereon to queſtion the whole Truth of the Goſpel. And theſe things are done in the purſuit of theſe *differences in* Rel.gion which abound among us. Wherefore if we would not contribute unto that intollerable ſcandal againſt the Goſpel, that the Religion it teacheth is pernicious to the peace of Mankind, and all that is praiſe worthy in the World, which muſt be accounted for; if we have any care about our own eternal Salvation, we ought to uſe our utmoſt diligence to arrive unto a ſafe conduct through all theſe difficulties.

This being our preſent caſe, there being ſuch differences in, and diviſions about Religion among us; the mannage-

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ment of them, being grown incurably ſcandalous and perilous; our enquiry is, what Guide or Conduct a *man that takes care of his own Salvation*, that would know the Truth, and have the benefit of it, that would pleaſe God here, and come unto the eternal Enjoyment of him hereafter, ought to betake himſelf, and firmly adhere unto, as that which will ſafely lead and direct him unto all theſe ends. For if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch.

Two things are pleaded to be this *ſafe and infallible Guide*; to have that conduct committed unto them, which every one who takes care of his Salvation is obliged to betake himſelf unto.

The firſt is the *Church of* Rome. She it is who at this time, laies a moſt vehement claim to be the only Authoritative infallible Guide of all Chriſtians, as unto their Faith, Worſhip and Obedience. We enquire not after a *miniſterial Guide* and the benefit which we may receive thereby. This they regard not, as that which leaves men the exerciſe of their own underſtandings, and uſe of all Divine Aids and Aſſiſtances, as unto the Information, Direction and Determination of their Minds in all that they are to believe and practiſe in Religion. But ſuch a Guidance as whereunto, by vertue of its Authority and Infallibility we are entirely and abſolutely to reſign our underſtandings and conſciences, what ever it leads us unto, is that which this Church claimeth, and without which ſhe is nothing, nor can ſtand one moment. This is that which thoſe who plead the cauſe of that Church at preſent, do wholly betake themſelves unto the promotion of, declining what lies in them, all other *Differences* and *Controverſies* between them and us. Such a Guide, they ſay, there muſt be of all Chriſtians, and this Guide is their Church. And they do wiſely conſult their own Intereſt therein. For if they can once gain this point, all other things

things which they aim at, will follow of their own accord; and they may ſatisfy the deſires of their hearts on the conſciences of men.

Wherefore this claim of theirs conſiſts of theſe three parts, or may be reduced unto theſe three Heads.

1. *That they, and they alone*, are the Church of Chriſt; All others who are called Chriſtians in the World, are Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, who belong not unto it, nor have any Intereſt in it. Howbeit if the deſcription given us of the Church of Chriſt in the Scripture be right and good, it is almoſt impoſſible there ſhould be any Society or combination of men on a religious account, more unlike it than that which is called the *Church of* Rome. This therefore muſt be taken upon their own credit, and vehement Affirmation, by them who have a mind ſo to do.

2. *That this Church which they alone are*, is entruſted with Authority over the ſouls and conſciences of all Chriſtians, and all that would be ſo, to be their *only Guide* in all that they are to know, believe and do in Religion; ſo that whoever gives not themſelves up unto their conduct, muſt periſh eternally. It were no hard task to manifeſt that a ſuppoſition hereof, is deſtructive unto the Nature of Evangelical Faith and Obedience, as alſo of all the Directions and Precepts given by Chriſt and his Apoſtles for the diſcharge of our Duty with reſpect unto them. But this they muſt obtain, or the whole preſent *Papal* Intereſt falls unto the ground. Yet neither will a ſuppoſition that there is ſuch a Church, ſecure them; their own pretences to be this Church being openly contradictory to the Scripture. Nor is the Power claimed herein derived from the Apoſtles who profeſſed themſelves not to *be Lords of the Faith of Believers*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. 1 *Pet.* 5. 3.

3. They plead that hereon, no more is required of any man, who takes care of his Salvation; but that he *give up himſelf abſolutely and entirely unto the conduct of their Church*, believing

believing what it propoſeth, and that on this ground alone, that it is propoſed by it, and obeying all its commands; whereby they ſeem to ſet this pretended Guide in *the Temple of God, ſhewing him that he is God.*

This is the claim of the Church of *Rome*; theſe are the Principles whereinto it is reſolved, which whether they have any thing in them of Truth or Modeſty, will immediately be made to appear.

Secondly, *The Holy Scripture with the Divine Aids and aſſiſtances for the underſtanding thereof, which God hath promiſed unto all that diligently ſeek him,* is pleaded to be the *only Rule and Guide* that men ought to betake themſelves unto, in caſe of thoſe important differences in Religon, which are under conſideration And the plea on the behalf thereof is reducible unto theſe five Heads.

1. That this Scripture is a *Divine ſupernatural Revelation* of God, his Mind and his Will. This Foundation is unqueſtionable, and will never fail them that build upon it. Thoſe of the *Roman Religion* will propoſe enſnaring Queſtions about it, unto them on whom they deſign. They will be asking how they know the Scripture to be the Word of God, labouring to diſprove the evidences they produce to prove it ſo to be. But this bold artifice is of no uſe in this caſe; for themſelves confeſs it ſo to be; only they prefer the Authority of their Church teſtifying it ſo to be, as more ſafely to be reſted in and truſted unto, than that of God himſelf, which cannot be unto the advantage of their cauſe, with any conſiderate Perſons.

2. That it is a *Divine Revelation of the whole Mind and Will of God, as unto all things that are neceſſary unto his Glory and our Salvation.* This it frequently teſtifieth of it ſelf; and on the former ſuppoſition of its being ſuch a Divine Revelation, its Teſtimony muſt be granted to be infallibly true. Both theſe Aſſertions the *Apoſtle* expreſly conjoyneth, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15.

3. 15, 16, 17. Somewhat they except here in reſpect of their *unwritten Traditions*, but dare not poſitively deny that the Scripture is a ſufficient Revelation of *all things abſolutely neceſſary* unto Salvation. Indeed to do ſo will leave no aſſurance unto any man that he can ever know what is neceſſary unto ſalvation. But they have a reſerve whereunto they betake themſelves on a conceſſion hereof; namely, that whatever be contained in it, it *cannot be underſtood*, but as the ſenſe of it is declared by their Church. But this is a bold unproved preſumption, contrary unto the deſign of God in giving us his Word, and the experience of all who have been exerciſed in it.

3. The *Way*, *Manner and Method of this* Revelation *are ſuch as are ſuited unto Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs*, whether they pleaſe men or no. It is with reference unto theſe things that they expatiate and enlarge themſelves, in charging the Scripture with obſcurity, and unfitneſs thereon to be our only Rule aud Guide. For the *Bible*, they ſay, is a Book compoſed of *Hiſtories*, *Prophecies*, *Songs*, *Prayers*, and *Epiſtles*, and is therefore unmeet for any ſuch uſe or end. But theſe things are of no conſideration in our preſent caſe. It is thus given out immediately by God himſelf; and therefore every way anſwers Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs; whether men are pleaſed with it or no, we are not at all concerned. He who deſigned it for the inſtruction of the Church, alone knows what was to be the *Method* of its compoſure unto that end. And it hath been proved on another occaſion, that conſidering the ſtate of the Church in its ſeveral Ages, the nature of that Faith which is to be wrought and confirmed by this Divine Revelation, with the manner of teaching becoming the Authority of God; and the holy Scripture could not have been given out unto us in any other Order or Method, than that wherein it is diſpoſed.

4. On theſe ſuppoſitions, *there neither is, nor can be more*

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required of us in order unto our eternal ſalvation, but that we underſtand aright, firmly believe, and yield obedience unto the Revelation of the Mind and Will of God that is made therein. The Aſſurance hereof is ſo evidently included in the foregoing Aſſertions, that it needs no confirmation. Every thought unto the contrary, is ſo injurious unto the Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Grace and Truth of God, ſo oppoſite unto all the Notions of the Minds of men, on a ſuppoſition of Gods ſpeaking unto them, that it ought to be rejected with deteſtation.

5. There are *efficacious Aids promiſed, and aſſured means appointed by God himſelf to help all that diligently ſeek him, unto a certain infallible underſtanding of his Mind in the Scripture*, ſo far as the Knowledge of it is neceſſary unto our Salvation. This alſo I have lately confirmed in a peculiar diſcourſe. Theſe are the Heads whereunto the Plea for the Guidance of the Scripture in all differences and diviſions about Religion, may be reduced.

The caſe being thus plainly ſtated, the enquiry hereon is, whether of theſe Guides, *a man that takes care of his own eternal Salvation*, ſhould betake himſelf, and firmly adhere unto, to the end.

In anſwer unto this Enquiry, I ſhall prove, that no wiſe man who feareth God, and is careful of the eternal condition of his own ſoul, *can chuſe the Church of* Rome *for this Guide*, foregoing the other of the Scripture, with the Divine Aids promiſed and given for the underſtanding thereof.

The Perſon of whom I ſpeak I ſuppoſe to be a *wiſe man*; that is, one who prefers things eternal unto thoſe that are temporal, ſo as not to be enſnared by earthly Intereſts and Advantages, unto the forfeiture of his Intereſt in things above; and will be careful not to be impoſed on by men who deſign their own Advantage in what they would perſwade him unto. He who is otherwiſe minded is a fool.

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He is alſo one that *feareth God*, and therefore is real and in good earneſt in Religion, as deſiring to *pleaſe him* in all things. For there are many who give the world no ſmall diſturbance about religious concerns, who do on all occaſions manifeſt that they have little or no regard unto God in what they ſay or do. But in the Perſons whom I addreſs unto, I ſuppoſe that they really take care above all other things of the eternal ſalvation of their ſouls. And I ſhall not deal with them by *abſtruſe Arguments*, nor by Teſtimonies of men that may be bandied up and down, on the one ſide and the other; but by ſuch plain Reaſonings as are accommodated unto the common underſtanding of all ſober, ſedate, rational Perſons, who own the Principles of Chriſtian Religion, which have their force from the general uſage of mankind in things of an alike nature, the common natural Principles of mens minds, where they are not vitiated and depraved, with the experience of what they have found already in any Duties of Religious Worſhip. Indeed if we could but prevail with men to be perſwaded that every man muſt believe for *himſelf*, and obey for *himſelf*, and give an account for *himſelf*, this difference would be at an end. For the choice of the Church of *Rome* to be the Guide enquired after, is nothing but the putting of the care of ſaving our ſouls unto others, who will not be able to anſwer for us, when our Trial ſhall come.

And this ſubject in particular I have choſen at preſent to inſiſt upon for two Reaſons.

1. Becauſe, as was before obſerved, thoſe who at preſent do plead the *Intereſt of this Church* among us, do decline what they can all particular Controverſies, and under various notions betake themſelves to this alone, about an *Authoritative Guide* and Leader of all Chriſtians, which they pretend their Church to be. They do not in their projection for Proſelytes, go to them and enter into Diſputes about *Tranſub-*

ſubſtantiation, the *Sacrifice of the Maſs*, *Adoration of Images*, or the like, no nor yet about the *Popes Infallibility*. But ſuppoſing themſelves to be greatly advantaged by the differences in Religion that are among us, which uſually they enlarge upon without either truth or modeſty, under a concealment of greater differences among themſelves, they inſiſt only on the neceſſity of ſuch a *Guide* which they pretend *their Church alone* to be. Hereby have they prevailed on many, who on one account or other, do think themſelves unmeet any longer to take care of their own ſalvation. And when once they have prevailed herein, there is nothing ſo horrid, nothing ſo wicked, that they cannot impoſe on the conſciences of their *Proſelytes*. They will not now ſcruple or ſtick at all, at thoſe things, which they would have dreaded to have thought of, whilſt they had the care of themſelves in any meaſure upon them. Not one man of a thouſand who ſuppoſeth that he hath himſelf and his own ſoul in charge, that he muſt give an account of and for himſelf, will venture on thoſe waies and practices which they will with great ſatisfaction ruſh into, under their conduct.

2. Becauſe of the ſtrange waies they have lately taken, to put this pretence into uſe and practice, and to *take us all* under their conduct. Pretending unto the guidance of our ſouls in the things of God, they have attempted to take us into their power as unto our Lives, Liberties, Laws, and all other our concernments in this world, which whoſoever doth unlawfully, forfeits all his own. And a ſufficient Indication it is of what Guidance we were like to meet withal, when way was to be made unto it, by Fire, Confuſion, Blood, Maſſacres and Sedition.

Should there be a *School* erected, pretending unto an eaſie certain way of teaching all Sciences, Divine and Humane, ſhould it pretend a *Grant* that nothing of this nature ſhould be taught or learned but in and by it; yet if I ſaw the poſts of

of the houſe hung like Shambles with the limbs of ſlaughtered perſons; if the ground about it be ſtrewed with the bones and aſhes of men burned to death; here lying one ſtrangled, there another ſtabbed, a third poiſoned; all for no other cauſe, but either becauſe they would not ſubmit to the teaching thereof, or would not learn things fooliſh and wicked, I ſhould avoid ſuch a School and its Power ſo far as I were able. But yet becauſe there hath of late among us a great acceſſion been made really unto this Guidance by perſons formerly profeſſing the *Proteſtant Religion*, I ſhall a little enquire into the Cauſes of it, or the Means whereby it hath been brought about. And I ſhall not fear to ſay, that as unto the moſt of them who have relinquiſhed the Proteſtant Religion, they are theſe that follow.

1. A *profound Ignorance* of the Internal Powers of Religion, with an utter want of all experience of them in themſelves, makes them an eaſie prey to ſeducers. Perſons who have never had any concernment in Religion, beyond the out-ſide ſolemnity of it, with ſome notions and opinions about the Doctrines of it, are eaſily *toſſed to and fro*, from one Religion unto another, or unto none at all, through the *cunning ſlights of men who lye in wait to deceive.*

When men have only a *form of Godlineſs* in the Profeſſion of the Truth, but know nothing of the *Power of it*, it is an uncertain Accident whether they perſevere in that Profeſſion or no. There are Internal Powers of true Religion which are efficacious on the minds of men, to enlighten them, to purifie them, and give them liberty from the adverſe Powers of darkneſs, vanity and bondage unto ſin. Where men have experience of them in their own hearts, there and there alone, if a vigorous impreſſion unto the contrary do befall them, will they be conſtant in the Profeſſion of the Truth. The ſucceſs of our *Roman Emiſſaries*, is confined almoſt unto that ſort of Perſons, who under the outward Profeſſion of the

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Proteſtant Religion, have been totally ignorant of the vertue and power of the Truth contained therein.

2. *Wickedneſs of Life* taking ſhelter in the Promiſes of eternal ſecurity, which that Church with preſumptuous confidence tenders unto all that will give up themſelves unto her conduct, though in the laſt moment of their lives, gains them a multitude of *Proſelytes*. This engine they apply unto many when they are leaving the world, even unto ſuch as having lived in ſinand ignorance,are ready to receive condign puniſhment for their villanies, deceiving them of thoſe few minutes which might be improved in ſeeking after *Evangelical* Faith and Repentance. But this is the leaſt uſe they make of it. There are in the world, among thoſe that are called *Proteſtants*, Mighty men, Nobles, men of Dignity and Revenue, who live in their ſins, and are reſolved ſo to do. Yet are they not able by any means to ſecure their conſciences from troubleſome fears of eternal miſeries that will enſue on the courſe wherein they are. By all crafty waies of acceſs and compliance,the *Factors of this Church* do inſinuate themſelves, or by others are introduced into the acquaintance of this ſort of Perſons. And the firſt thing they offer unto them, is abſolute ſecuri y of eternal ſalvation, if they will but relinquiſh Hereſie, wherein it is impoſſible they ſhould ever be ſaved, and betake themſelves unto the conduct of the Church of *Rome*;of the change of their lives,the Relinquiſhment of their ſins, of Repentance from dead works, of the Life of God, and univerſal Obedience therein, there are no words between them. Many of theſe perſons who are reſolved beforehand rather to part with all theReligion in the world,than with one of their luſts and ſins, do readily embrace the *compoſition* offered. For really that which is tendred unto them is a conſiſtency between living in ſin, and aſſured going unto Heaven, which before they knew not that they could be reconciled. For however they ſhall live for the future, ſuppoſe in the

the ſins of adultery, fornication, prophane ſwearing, luxury, drunkenneſs, or the like, the Church will take care that by Confeſſions, Maſſes and Purgatory, they ſhall be undoubtedly ſaved. At this door have entred great numbers of unclean Leaſts unto the encreaſe of the Herd, who often prove the moſt forward Zealots for the *Catholick Cauſe*.

3. *Secular Intereſts* and advantages accommodated unto all ſorts of Perſons, are another means of their prevalency. There are no ſorts of Perſons from the higheſt to the loweſt, that come within their walk and compaſs, or unto whom they can have acceſs, with the leaſt probability of ſucceſs, unto whom they have not in a readineſs to propoſe ſome *ſecular advantages*, ſuited unto their State, Condition, Inclinations and Abilities. *Great men* ſhall have favour and correſpondencies with Potentates abroad, beſides a principal intereſt in that alteration in national affairs, which they doubt not but they ſhall introduce. *Schollers* ſhall be uſed and preferred, at leaſt when they have any eminency in abilities, they ſhall not want ſteem and advancement. *Mechanicks* ſhall be employed, and the pooreſt one way or other provided for. And for all ſorts of diſcontented Perſons, who may be of any uſe unto their Intereſt, they have the refuge of their *Monaſteries*, for their entertainment. And is it any wonder, if in this degenerate age, wherein the moſt of men do openly and viſibly declare a predominancy in their minds and affections of things carnal and temporal, above thoſe that are ſpiritual and eternal, many be enſnared by theſe promiſes, which either ſhall be made good unto them, or at leaſt are ſufficient to keep them in expectation, untill they are ingaged beyond recovery.

4. Many, it is to be feared, fall under the dreadful account given of Gods Righteous dealings with thoſe who obſtinately live in ſin, under the Profeſſion of the Truth, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 10, 11, 12. *Becauſe they received not the Love of the Truth*

Truth that they might be ſaved, God ſhall ſend them ſtrong Deluſions that they ſhould believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs. This is that which we have more cauſe to fear with reſpect unto this Nation, than all the Artifices of of the *Roman* Church.

Laſtly; How powerful and prevalent *the laſt voice* of this Church may prove I know not. The *Motto* of ſome potentates on their great Guns, is *Vox Ultima Regum*; the laſt voice of Kings; that of this Church is fire and fagot; wherewith I pray and hope that they ſhall never more be heard to ſpeak in *England.*

Allowing them theſe advantages, I ſhall now prove that *no wiſe or ſober man, who takes care of his own Salvation, can give up himſelf to the conduct of the Church of* Rome, *in his choice of* Religion, *then when there are the moſt abounding conteſts about the Truth, and the right way of its* Profeſſion, which is ſuppoſed our preſent caſe.

In my firſt reaſon I ſhall proceed no farther but to render this pretended Guide *ſuſpected* with all wiſe and ſober men. For it will be granted I ſuppoſe, that we ought throughly to conſider who or what that *Guide* is, whereunto we do abſolutely reſign the diſpoſal of all our ſpiritual concernments without power of Revocation.

If any men were to make ſuch an abſolute Truſt of their Lives, Eſtates aud Liberties into the hand of another man or of other men, putting them all abſolutely out of their own Power, certainly they would think it their Wiſdom and Intereſt to conſider aright how and what they are, unto whom they do ſo fully and abſolutely reſign themſelves, and all that they have. And if they have any juſt ſuſpicion of their honeſty or Faithfulneſs, or that they ſeek themſelves or their own advantage in taking this *Truſt* upon them, they will not eaſily be induced to reſign up their all unto them. Yea the more

more earneſt they are to perſwade them, the more will they ſuſpect that there is *Knavery* in the cauſe. How much more carefull ought we to be in the chuſing a *Guide* into whoſe power and diſpoſal we muſt reſign all the eternal concernments of our ſouls; which all men do, who abſolutely give give up the conduct of themſelves unto the Church of *Rome* in all matters of Religion. For notwithſtanding all their pleas of a ſure and ſafe *bank* for the conſciences of men, there are great preſumptions that they will *break at laſt*, and leave them who have entruſted them unto eternal beggary.

I ſhall give but one *Reaſon* which renders this pretended Guide ſo *juſtly ſuſpected*, as that no wiſe man can commit himſelf thereunto in things of this importance.

And this is the *prodigious worldly ſecular advantages* which the *Church of Rome* hath made unto it ſelf by this pretence of being the only Guide of all Chriſtians in matters of Religion. For this pretence is the ſole foundation of the whole Papacy; which when the ſand of it is removed, muſt fall to the ground. And we may conſider both what they have obtained by it, and how they uſe their Acquiſition. For (1.) By vertue of this pretence alone, they have erected their *Popedom*, obtained *Principalities* and *Soveraignties*, poſſeſſed themſelves of the principal *Revenues* of moſt Nations of *Europe*, have heaped up *huge Treaſures* of wealth, wherewith they maintain innumerable Perſons who have nothing to do, but by all Arts to promote their Intereſt, eſpecially that numerous ſociety which is grown at this day the peſt and terror of the world. Theſe things are evident in other Nations, they were ſo formerly in this; and in all the Zeal which of late they have pretended for the converſion, as they call it, of this Nation, it is legibly written in all the parts of their deſign, and the whole mannagement of it, that it was *Power*, *Dominion*, *Wealth* and *Revenue* unto themſelves that they intended; this Place, that Dignity, and the other Revenue, and

the carnally ſweet Dominion over the conſciences of all ſorts of Perſons were in their eye.

2. We may conſider what *uſe they make* of theſe ſecular Advantages and Revenues which they have obtained meerly by vertue of this pretence. And it may be ſaid with modeſty, that theſe things were never forced to be wickedly ſerviceable unto the luſts of men, among the Heathens themſelves, more than they are and have been among all ſorts of men, in the Church of *Rome*. Ambition, Avarice, Pride, Luxury, Senſuality, Cruelty, are the Deities that they ſacrifice the ſpoils of the ſouls and conſciences of men unto. There is no ſort of wickedneſs, not the higheſt and moſt provoking, not the moſt vile and ſordid that Humane Nature is capable of, but multiplied inſtances may be given of the perpetration of them, by the Advantage which they make of this pretence.

This conſideration I ſay is ſufficient unto all wiſe men to render this *pretended Guide* juſtly ſuſpected; and to bring the vagabond unto the ſtricteſt and ſevereſt examination that the Law and Word of God doth direct unto in ſuch caſes.

1. It is ſo on the account of *Reaſon* and common uſage amongſt men in caſes of an alike nature. If it be notoriouſly known and evident, that any ſort of perſons, whatever elſe they ſeem to be or act, do make great and unaccountable advantages unto themſelves by any Truſts that are committed unto them, pretending nothing in the mean time but the good of them who ſo entruſt them; a wiſe man will not abſolutely give up the diſpoſal of himſelf and all his concerns unto ſuch perſons. Yea when men are more than ordinarily urgent to have ſuch Truſts committed unto them, we do ordinarily enquire what is their intereſt in this matter of care and trouble that makes them ſo earneſt. And if we find that they have made their own *Advantages* on all ſuch occaſions, we ſhall not be too forward to give up unto them

them all that we have; eſpecially if the reſignation of our ſelves and our concerns deſired by them, be ſuch as we ſhall never more have the diſpoſal of any thing in our own power, nor ſhall they be *accountable* for any thing they do thereon. It may be you will ſay, thoſe who deſire this great Truſt to be repoſed in them, are in all other things of Vertue and Piety, moſt eminent above others. But what if by various waies and means they diſcover themſelves to be for the moſt part of the very worſt of men. It will aſſuredly be ſaid, that ſuch a kind of Truſt as that mentioned, would be ridiculous, and was never made by any wiſe man; fools and mad men being only meet to be confined unto it.

Yet ſuch is the Truſt that the *Church of Rome* requireth that we ſhould commit unto her, and that in affaires of infinitely greater importance than all other earthly concerns. For ſhe would have us *abſolutely* reſign up our ſouls and conſciences with all our eternal Intereſts, unto her Conduct and Guidance, without any reſervation for the uſe our own Light, Reaſon, Knowledge or Faith, & without power of Revocation on pain of damnation. In the mean time it is evident and notorious, that by vertue of this *Pretence*, ſhe hath erected the Popedom, obtained Principalities and Dominion, endowed her ſelf with the principal Revenues of the Nations, and erected a Supremacy over Kings and Kingdoms to be diſpoſed of at their pleaſure. Is it not the Duty of a wiſe man when any of theſe Perſons are importunate with him to forſake the Scripture, and his own underſtanding, with all the experience which ever he had of the Power of Religion, and to give up himſelf abſolutely unto their conduct; to enquire what is the *Intereſt of theſe men* in theſe things which makes them thus importunate.

And if this appear openly to be an encreaſe or confirmation of their ſecular advantages, he will ſay that this is a Truſt fit only for them to make, whom Darkneſs, Igno-

rance, the love of Sin, and a vitious converſation have rendered ſpiritual fools and bedlams, that can in nothing guide themſelves. Eſpecially he will do ſo, when he ſhall find that theſe high pretenders to be the *only Guides* of the ſouls and conſciences of other men, do for the moſt part walk in paths themſelves that go down to the Chambers of Death. That they are ſo far from giving examples of Chriſtian Meekneſs, Humility, Self-denial, Faith, Love or real Holineſs, from giving a juſt Repreſentation of Chriſt in the Image of God on themſelves, as that in many great, notable, prodigious inſtances they repreſent the Devil, with all his Malice, Cruelty and Blood, unto the World.

2. There is that which doth hereon, yet farther increaſe a juſt ſuſpicion of this pretended Guide. And this is the *way of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and of his Apoſtles under him and after him, unto whom that Conduct of our ſouls which the Pope and Church of *Rome* do now lay claim unto, was really committed by God even the Father. It is known that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, though in his Divine Perſon he was the Soveraign Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth, yet in that *Miniſtry* wherein he took the Guidance of mens ſouls, he obtained nothing, poſſeſſe nothing beyond food and raiment, nor made the leaſt outward Advantage by any good that he did, or by any miracles that he wrought. This ſtate in general belonged unto his *Humiliation*, and was a part of his ſufferings. But withal it was choſen by himſelf for this end, to convince and ſatisfie the ſouls of men, that he deſigned nothing in all his Inſtruction and Guidance of them, but the Glory of God in their eternal welfare; gaining nothing unto himſelf but reproaches, perſecution, and the Croſs. This he did as knowing that there was that Glory, Beauty, Power and Uſefulneſs in the Truth wherein he inſtructed men, that nothing was outwardly needful to give it an effectual entrance into their minds, but only to deliver them from

prejudices,

prejudices, which all ſelf advantages made by him would have given unto them. The *Pope* and *Mahomet* who have ſince pretended unto the ſame conduct of mens minds in Religion, which was entruſted originally with him *whom the Father ſealed*, knowing that what they had to teach of their own, and to lead men into, had no Glory, Beauty, Evidence, nor Uſe in it ſelf, have wiſely betaken themſelves unto the waies of fraud and force, to impoſe their Doctrine on the conſciences of men, with this bait and allurement, that what profit and advantage they make unto themſelves, by the conduct which they have aſſumed, others according to their proportion ſhall be ſharers therein.

The *Holy Apoſtles* ſucceeded unto the Perſonal Miniſtry of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as unto this conduct of the ſouls of men. Such Power was committed unto them, by him, who ſent them *even as the Father ſent him*; ſuch Aſſurance was there in their conduct, through Infallible Inſpiration, and the preſence of the Holy Ghoſt with them in an extraordinary manner, as that all men were bound to give up themſelves unto their Conduct and Guidance. Howbeit they judged that there was no Duty more incumbent on them, than to make it evident unto all the world, that they neither ſought nor would accept of any temporal Advantages unto themſelves by the Truſt repoſed in them; but were contented that their portion in this world ſhould lye in all the extremities and calamities of it. And this they willingly ſubmitted unto, that all men might he encouraged to truſt them in their everlaſting affairs, when they ſaw what looſers they were by it in this World, without deſire, hope, or expectation of any better condition.

The *Church of Rome* laies claim to the very ſame Authority over, and conduct of the conſciences of men in Religion, as were committed unto Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles. It is as ſafe, as they pretend, for a man to caſt off the Authority and

and Inſtitutions of Chriſt himſelf, as to diſſent from thoſe of the *Pope*. But what in the mean time meaneth this bleating of the Sheep and lowing of the Oxen; whence is it that they have mannaged the pretence hereof, to the gaining of Power, Dominion, Wealth and Revenues unto themſelves, beyond that of the greateſt Kings and Princes in this World? Let others do as they ſhall think fit, I ſhall never commit the conduct of my ſoul unto them, who for ought I know would never look after me, nor any other, were it not for the advantage they make by it unto the ſervice of their earthly deſires.

It may be ſaid, that *other Churches* and Perſons do make advantages unto themſelves by that conduct of the ſouls of men which they lay claim unto. And if this be ſufficient to render ſuch *Guides* ſuſpected, we ſhall ſcatter the Churches, and leave none to guide them. I anſwer, it doth no way follow. For the Rules, Meaſures, and outward Allowances for and in the name of their Labour and Guidance unto the Miniſters of the Goſpel, are in general ſo ſtated in the Scripture, as that men cannot miſtake therein unto their prejudice. But we are not at all concerned in what Advantages men make unto themſelves hereby; provided that the conduct they pretend unto, be ſuch as is accompanied with no *dominion over our Faith*, but is propoſed only as an *help* thereunto. Whilſt men require not an abſolute Reſignment of our ſouls and conſciences unto them, but leave us unto the perfect libert of our own minds, to judge upon and receive what they propoſe unto us; to examine and try all that they inſtruct us in, which we may reject or refuſe, according as it evidenceth it ſelf to be good or evil unto us; there is no great danger in our conduct.

This I ſay is ſufficient to render this *pretended Guide* which with ſo much vehement importunity would impoſe it ſelf upon us, to be ſo *juſtly ſuſpected*, unto all men not forſaken as well

of

of common Reaſon, as of all due Reverence unto the Word of God, as that they will not readily embrace it.

2. As what hath been ſpoken is ſufficient to render this *pretended Guide ſuſpected* with all ſober and conſiderate Perſons; ſo there are cogent reaſons, why it ought to be *abſolutely rejected*, by all who take care of their own eternal Salvation. The cauſe peculiarly under conſideration is ſtated on a double ſuppoſition.

1. That there are ſuch *differences* in and about Religion among us, as wherein the eternal Salvation of the Souls of men are immediately concerned. For ſome of them conſiſt in Opinions, Principles and Practiſes, pernicious and deſtructive unto Salvation, as each ſide doth acknowledge and contend. And it is meet the cauſe at preſent ſhould be expreſly ſtated on this ſuppoſition, becauſe thoſe of the *Roman Church* deſign their great advantage from it.

2. That in this caſe we ought diligently to apply our ſelves unto ſome *ſafe Guide* which may lead and conduct us in the right way, wherein we may glorify God, and obtain eternal Bleſſedneſs unto our own ſouls. This alſo is not only allowed by them, but *fiercely contended for*, as a Foundation of their whole cauſe. Wherefore to determin our Thoughts aright in our enquiry on theſe ſuppoſitions, we may conſider the things that follow.

1. The firſt Suppoſition is *plainly ſtated in the Scripture*. It is plainly affirmed therein that ſuch things were then beginning in the Church, that they would fall out in after ages, and encreaſe towards the End & Conſummation of all things. See to this purpoſe, *Acts* 20. 29, 30. 1 *Tim.* 4. 1, 2, 3. 2 *Tim.* 4. 3, 4. 2 *Pet.* 2. 1, 3. 1 *John* 4. 1, 2, 3. all in compliance with the holy warnings and predictions of our bleſſed Saviour himſelf unto the ſame purpoſe, *Matth.* 24 4, 5, 11, 23, 24, 25, 26. In all theſe places and many other, the Cauſe as ſtated in our ſuppoſition is expreſly foretold, with the pernicious

nicious effects of Opinions and Hereſies, overthrowing the Foundation of Faith, and deſtroying the ſouls of men. In this cauſe is a certain Guide neceſſary in a peculiar manner.

2. In *no one place*, either in expreſs words, or by direct conſequence, are Believers or the Diſciples of Chriſt, directed in this caſe to betake themſelves unto ſuch a Guidance of the *Church of* Rome. They are not ſo in any one place where theſe Diviſions are foretold, where properly ſuch directions ſhould be expected or no where; nor yet in any other place whatever. Any one Divine Teſtimony unto this purpoſe, giving this Direction on that ſuppoſition, ſhall for ever determine this Controverſie.

Shall we think that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, foreknowing, foretelling, and warning all his Diſciples of ſuch a dangerous ſtate and condition, as from which they cannot eſcape or be delivered, without a *Guide* that will ſafely lead and conduct them, if there were but *one* ſuch Guide prepared and appointed by him, ſhould no where in any Divine Revelation direct them thereunto? Doth a ſuppoſition hereof truly repreſent unto us his love, care and compaſſion towards the Church? Can any thing more injurious unto his Wiſdom, Faithfulneſs and Honour, be once imagined? It is impoſſible therefore that any man in the caſe ſuppoſed, ſhould betake himſelf unto the ſole conduct of the *Pope or Church of Rome*, without caſting contempt on him and his Authority. But,

3. Yet there is farther Evidence of his Mind herein, in that we are expreſly in this caſe directed unto *another Guide*, without any mention of the *Church of* Rome, which is utterly excluſive of this pretence. For (1.) All Believers are commanded themſelves to examine and try all falſe Teachers, Prophets and Spirits that are not of God, Doctrines ſubverting the Faith, and endangering the ſouls of men; which is utterly inconſiſtent with that abſolute univerſal Reſignation of themſelves unto the Guidance of the Church of Rome, which is claimed by it.

See

See 1 *Joh.*4.1,2,3. (2. They are directed unto the Way, Means and Rule whereby they muſt make this Trial, and come unto the final determination in their own minds, *Iſa.*8.20. 2 *Pet.* 1. *v.*19. 2 *Tim.*3.15,16,17. And this alſo is diametrically oppoſite unto that Reſignation of themſelves unto the *Church of Rome*, which it requireth of them. (3.) They have a *Guide* promiſed unto them, to give them an underſtanding of the Rule in the diſcharge of this Duty, and to enable them to make a right and ſafe Determination thereon, *Joh* 16.13. 1 *Joh.* 2 26,27. Theſe things are conſiſtent with a *Miniſterial Guide*, ſuch as is found in all true Churches, wherein none pretend to be Lords of our Faith, but only helpers of our Joy. But with a Supreme Authoritative Guide requiring an abſolute Reſignation of our underſtandings and conſciences unto it ſelf, they are altogether inconſiſtent.

This is the ſubſtance of our caſe, and this is the Determination of it given us by the Holy Ghoſt. Diverſities and Diviſions in Principles, Opinions and Practices in Religion are ſuppoſed, unto as great an height as they can be at, at this day in the World. Teachers *ſpeaking perverſe things*; *departures from the Faith*, *giving heed to ſeducing Spirits and Doctrines of Devils*; *Teachers not enduring ſound Doctrine*; *turning away mens Ears from the Truth*, *and turning them unto Fables*; *falſe Teachers*, *bringing in damnable Hereſies*, *denying the Lord that bought them*, *many following their pernicious waies*; *Spirits of falſe Prophets going out in the World*, *the Spirit of Antichriſt.* Theſe things I ſay are all ſuppoſed and foretold in the Scripture. In this caſe and ſtate of things, that we be not ſeduced, that our ſouls be not ruined, we are commanded our ſelves to try and examine all thoſe who teach ſuch things, whether they be of God or no; and by the Scripture we are to try them if we intend not to be deceived and undone for ever. Unto the right underſtanding hereof a ſure and faithful Guide is promiſed unto us, to lead us unto all Truth; ſo that no

concernment of Religion is more plainly ſtated, and as unto our Duty, more expreſly determined in the Scripture than this is.

It is ſo in a peculiar manner, in the *firſt Epiſtle of John the Apoſtle.* Before the end of his daies, Diviſions, Errors, Hereſies began to abound in Chriſtian Religion. This he fully teſtifieth, *Chap* 4. 1,2,3,4. And *Epiſt. the* 2. 7. According unto his Duty he writes unto Believers to warn them of their danger, with reference unto them that *ſeduced them*, or attempted ſo to do, *chap.* 2. 26. And he writes unto this purpoſe unto *Fathers, young Men and Children*, or profeſſed Believers of all ſorts, degrees and endowments, *ver.* 12,13. and this not becauſe *they did not know the Truth, but becauſe they did know it*, and had experience of its Power, *ver.* 21. But in all the Directions he gives them for the diſcharge of their Duty, ſo as that they might eſcape the dangers they were expoſed unto; there is not any *one word*, any intimation that they ſhould betake themſelves unto the Guidance of this or that, or any Church, much leſs that which is called the *Church of Rome.* But the ſumme of his Direction is, that they ſhould rely on the *Unction* they had received from the Holy One, or the Aids and Supplies of the Spirit of God, to underſtand the Scripture in the Examination and Trial they were to make of all theſe things, *chap.* 2. *ver.* 20, 27.

But to preſerve their Intereſt, they tell us that theſe Precepts and Promiſes are given unto the *Church*, and not unto individual Believers; as though the Church were any thing materially, but individual Believers, and formally but a diſpoſition of them into a ſacred Order for their edification. *Man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was made for man.* Believers were not made for the Church, but the Church is made for Believers; and is of no uſe, but with reſpect unto their edification. And to deny all individual perſons to be the firſt object of all Goſpel Precepts and Promiſes,

miſes, Churches in what ſenſe ſoever you take them, being ſo only as they are directive of their Faith and Obedience, is to exempt their conſciences from the Authority of Chriſt, to turn them into beaſts, and to overthrow the Goſpel.

Let men now who *take care of their own eternal Salvation*, place themſelves in their Thoughts in that condition, which the preſent caſe and their own circumſtances do place them in. The World, the Place where they live, the People whereunto they do belong, are filled with different Apprehenſions, Principles, Opinions and Practices in and about Religion. Some of theſe, as thoſe between the *Papiſts* and the *Proteſtants*, have immediate influence into their eternal condition of Bleſſedneſs or Miſery, as both parties contend. Dreadful diſorders and confuſions have followed, and are like to follow theſe differences even in this World. They will in this caſe find, that it highly concerns them to take care that they be not deceived, and thereby ruined eternally, as multitudes are; that they be not high-minded, but fear. A *Guide* is that which they are to look after, that may carry them ſafely through all theſe difficulties and dangers. Two immediately offer themſelves unto them, tendring the utmoſt aſſurance in theſe things, which the nature of man is capable of in this world. The one is the Pope or *Church of Rome*, which requires no more of them, but a blind ſubmiſſion unto its Guidance; a way I confeſs to extricate themſelves, and to deliver them from all care about their own ſouls, eaſie and facile, if ſafe. The other is the *Holy Scripture*, with the promiſed Aids of the Spirit of God, to lead us unto the underſtanding of it, and the Truth contained in it. But in this way it is required of men, that they make uſe of their own Reaſon, Underſtanding, Judgment, Diligence, with fervent Prayer for Divine Aſſiſtance.

The preſent Queſtion is, Whether of theſe two Guides ſuch Perſons ought to betake themſelves unto? I am on the

conſideration of one directive Reaſon only, others ſhall be afterwards ſpoken unto. And this is, that the Scripture, which all acknowledge to be the Word of God, to ſpeak in his Name, expreſly ſuppoſing this caſe, and all the circumſtances of it before laid down, doth thereon, frequently direct and command us, to make uſe of this latter Guide, if we deſire to be ſaved; and doth no where, no not once, on a ſuppoſition of this caſe, ſend us unto the Guidance of the Church or Pope of *Rome*, or any other Church whatever. Wherefore for men to ſuffer themſelves to be inveagled, their ſouls to be perverted, and their Faith overthrown by a few captious *Sophiſtical* Reaſonings of men of perverſe minds, purſuing their own ſecular Intereſt; to turn aſide from the commandments of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles, in ſo plain, evident and indiſputable a caſe and Duty, is ſuch a folly in it ſelf, ſuch an impiety againſt God, ſuch a contempt of the Lord Chriſt, his Wiſdom, Authority and Care, as muſt be eternally accounted for.

Thirdly, The things for the moſt part which this *pretended Guide* propoſeth unto, and impoſeth on the Conſciences, Faith, and Practice of them who give up themſelves unto its conduct, are ſo unreaſonable, ſo contrary unto the common ſenſe of Chriſtians, and the very firſt notions of the minds of men any way enlightened with the Doctrine of the Goſpel; ſo directly oppoſite unto the deſign of God in the Revelation of himſelf unto us, and his commands concerning our Faith and Obedience; that it is a thing aſtoniſhable, how they ſhould attain an acceſs unto them who have any ſenſe of theſe things. But when once men have their *eyes bored out*, as they do it for themſelves in the Reſignation they make of their underſtandings and conſciences unto the conduct of this Church, they muſt *grind* whatever is brought unto them. I ſhall briefly inſtance in ſome few things of this ſort.

1. The *keeping of the Scripture from their daily and continual*

nual uſe. I ſpeak not directly unto them who being brought up from their infancy in that Church, know nothing of the Scripture, but that the Bible is an obſcure dangerous Book unto all Lay-men, which *Hereticks* make uſe of unto their advantage. Such Perſons can be contented to want it, or be without it, all their lives; eſpecially ſeeing it is full of Light and Principles inconſiſtent with their carnal Luſts and Intereſt. But I ſpeak of ſuch who many of them like *Timothy* have known the Scriptures from Children; and having been converſant in them, have had ſome experience of their Power.

Unto ſuch as theſe come Perſons in the name and on the behalf of this *pretended Guide.* And a compaſs of plauſible words they will uſe, fit to diſtract and amuſe weak and unſtable minds. But the plain ſenſe of what they ſay in this caſe is; *caſt away this Bible, this Book; it doth but perplex you and diſturb your minds with things that are above you, which you cannot underſtand,* and is therefore an occaſion of almoſt all the pernicious errors that are in the World Will not any ſuch Perſon be ready to ſay; hath God given this Book, this alone, as the only Revelation of his Mind and Will unto us, as the Guide and Rule whereby we may come unto the eternal Enjoyment of him, which you dare not directly deny? hath he commanded me to Read, Study, Meditate, and be converſant in it continually? have I found the benefit, of the Light, counſel and conſolation adminiſtred by it in my own ſoul; and ſhall I now forſake it, caſt it away, to betake my ſelf unto *your Guidance* and direction? ſhall I forſake God, and Chriſt, and the Holy Spirit, all the Prophets and Apoſtles, who daily ſpeak unto me in and by this word, to comply with you? The very *horror* of the Propoſal is enough to ſecure the minds of any who have the leaſt ſpark of ſpiritual Light or Grace, from a compliance with it? Wherefore whether it be reaſonable to leave the Word of God, which is full of Light, ſhining like the Sun in the Firmament, to

follow

follow the glimmerings of this wandring *Meteor*, which aroſe out of an horrible pit, and there will end, is left unto their conſideration who take care of the eternal ſalvation of their own ſouls.

2. The *Solemn Worſhip of God* by the Guides of the *Church in a Tongue and Language which the people do not underſtand, is another of their Propoſals.* This they are bound to attend unto on pain of damnation. But how any thing can be more contrary unto the common ſenſe of them who know what it is to *pray in a due manner*, no man can conceive. As unto them who do not, yet is it not hard to convince them, where they are not obſtinate on other prejudices, how irrational this Propoſal is, how inconſiſtent with that *reaſonalle ſervice* that God requireth of us. Others will ſay, that they find hinderances and difficulties enough from, and in this Duty, from the weakneſs of their Faith, and inſtability of their Minds, the ſuggeſtions of Satan, with diverſions from outward objects; if you add thereunto that they *ſhall not underſtand a word* of what is ſpoken in Prayer, and they know well enough they ſhall never pray at all. And the Truth is, did we not know whence they took occaſion for this ſtrange contrivance ſo contrary to the nature of all Religion; and what advantage they make of it unto themſelves, it could never be ſufficiently admired, how ſuch a ſenſleſs Imagination ſhould befall their Minds. I do not deſign to ſhew how contrary it is to Scripture Precepts and Examples, to the practice of all the Saints under the Old Teſtament, and the New, with that of the Primitive Churches, and on all accounts what an abominable Sacriledge it is, ſo to rob the Church of its chiefeſt Treaſure; it hath been done by others ſufficiently. I only give it as an inſtance how unmeet this *pretended Church* is to be ſuch a Guide, as whereunto we are to make an abſolute Reſignation of our under-

underſtandings and conſciences in all concerns of Religion. And there is nothing that can make them, who have any regard unto their own ſouls, to reject its Guidance with more deteſtation. Shall they accept them for their Guide in Religion, who under pain of damnation confine them in all the publick Worſhip of the Church, unto the uſe of a Language that they do not underſtand? That inſtead of praying with their underſtandings, they muſt be content with a dumb ſhew, with poſtures and geſtures, with Altars and Pictures, the antick actings of a Prieſt, and a noiſe of words, whoſe ſenſe they know not at al? If a man would ſeek for an Infallible Guide to Hell, it is hard to find one more likely and better qualified unto that purpoſe than is this *Church of Rome.*

3. There is at the ſame inſtant propoſed unto us by this *Guide*, the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, with the Sacrifice of the Maſs thereon depending. This they ſay we muſt believe, at leaſt avow that we do believe on pain of eternal and temporal deſtruction alſo. But herein they require of us, that on the meer credit of their conduct, we muſt renounce the uſe of our ſenſes, the exerciſe of our *Reaſon*, and actings of Faith on Divine Revelations, all things whereby we are either *Men* or *Chriſtians*, that we may become blind Idolaters. But they who pretending to be our Guides in Religion, do thereon impoſe this monſtrous Imagination on our credulity, with the Idolatrous Practice wherein it iſſues, had need give us better ſecurity of their Divine Infallibility, than the Angels in Heaven can do. For if an *Angel from Heaven* ſhould preach this Doctrine unto us, we may ſafely eſteem him accurſed, *Gal.* 1. 8.

4. The laſt thing I ſhall inſtance in of this kind is, the *Adoration or Worſhip of Images.* God ſaies concerning it expreſly, *Thou ſhalt not make unto thy ſelf any graven Images, thou ſhalt not bow dow to them, nor worſhip them.* They ſay con-

contrary; *Thou ſhalt make unto thy ſelf graven Images, thou ſhalt bow down to them and adore them.* And in their uſe they make them the *ſtage plaies* in Religion, wherewith the minds of ignorant unſtable Perſons are allured and ſeduced into all manner of ſuperſtitious practices, and turned off from the ſimplicity of the Goſpel. For being once perſwaded on the credit of their Guide, that the making, uſe, and Adoration of them are lawfull, there is enough in the carnal minds of men, to make them dote, and even be mad upon them. Wherefore no leſs ſervice is done unto the intereſt of ſin, and the Kindom of Satan hereby, than if they ſhould have taken off all ſenſe of the Authority of God from the conſciences of men, in the Prohibition of thoſe things which their ſenſual luſts are moſt prone unto. Could they have diſſolved the obligation of the commands of God, againſt Adultery, or Stealing, and left men unto the guidance of their own luſts and inclinations, it is evident what abominable exceſſes the generality of men would run into. Neither do the luſts of the mind engage perſons with leſs fierceneſs into the purſuit of their objects, than do thoſe of the fleſh. And thence the diſannulling of this command of God, hath been an inlet unto all abominable Idolatry. But herein they will not allow thoſe who give up themſelves unto their conduct, once to conſider the direct *contradiction* that is between Gods commands and theirs; but believe they muſt what their Church believes, and practiſe accordingly; which is the moſt intollerable Tyranny over the ſouls of men, that ever was attempted. Only they will tell us of *Latria.* and *Dulia*, and *Hyperdulia*, of *Religious Worſhip that is direct or reductive, tranſient or terminated on this or that object*, and after a maze of the like inſignificant Terms, the concluſion is poſitive, *Thou ſhalt worſhip graven Images.*

There

There are alſo ſundry other things wherein they do or would impoſe on the credulity of men, in open contradiction unto their *Senſe*, *Reaſon*, and *Experience*, as well as unto all evidence of Truth from the Light and Guidance of the Scripture; which are ſomewhat of another Nature than thoſe foregoing. I ſhall only mention ſome of them. As (1.) They would have us believe, that *we cannot believe the Scripture to be the Word of God, but upon the Teſtimony and Authority of their Church* All the evidence that a man is capable of in his own mind, that he doth ſo believe it; all that can be given in ordering our lives according unto it, as the Word of God; the aſſurance and Peace which multitudes of all ſorts have in reſolving all their intereſt in things eternal into the Faith of it; the ſufferings and martyrdomes which many have undergone in the confirmation of it; the uncontroulable pleas that are made of the ſufficiency of the *Motives* whereon we believe it ſo to be, are nothing with them; but we muſt ſay, we cannot believe the Scripture to be the Word of God, but only on the Teſtimony and Authority of their Church; and therein both give our ſelves the lye, as unto what we know and are aſſured of, and judge millions to Hell, who have lived and died in the Faith of it, without any reſpect unto that Teſtimony or Authority. (2.) They will *have us to believe, what they do not indeed believe themſelves:* As for inſtance, *Juſtification by our own works.* For practically many of them do for this end truſt unto Abſolutions, Maſſes, the Sacraments, and Sacramentals of the Church, with a reſerve for the complement of it in Purgatory; which are not our own works; and ſome of the wiſeſt of them do betake themſelves at laſt to the *only Mercy and Grace of God.* So would they have us to venture our ſouls on that, whereon they will not adventure their own. (3) *Papal Perſonal Infallibility* was once a principal Article of their Creed, and the generality of their Pro-

ſelytes do receive it from them, with no leſs firm aſſent, than they do unto that of Chriſt himſelf. But among themſelves they have ſo multiplied their wrangling Diſputes about it, as makes it evident, that they believe it only ſo far as holds proportion with their Intereſt, and is ſubſervient thereunto, indeed not at all. Their Diſputes of a Difference between the *Court of Rome*, and the *Church of Rome*, of the Pope in his Chair and out of it, in the uſe of help and advice of others, and without this, in a General Council and without it, in a particular Council and without it; in matter of Right and of Fact; and the like; make it evident that they know not in what ſenſe to believe it, and ſo indeed believe it not at all. And whereas they do themſelves confeſs that ſome of their *Popes* have been of the worſt of men, yea monſters for luxury, uncleanneſs and violence, that which they require of us, is not only hard and unreaſonable, but impoſſible for any ſober man to grant; namely, that we believe ſuch Perſons to have been infallible in the Declaration of all Divine Heavenly Myſteries; ſo as that we ought to acquieſce in their Declaration of them. (4) They would have us believe that the ſame Body of Chriſt which was once *in the fulneſs* of time, *made of a woman*, by the Power of God, is every day *made of a wafer*, by the Power of a Prieſt. And what indignities are hereby caſt on his Perſon, hath been ſufficiently demonſtrated.

Theſe are ſome of the *Propoſals* which this pretended Guide makes unto all them who give up themſelves unto its conduct, to be believed with a ſuitable practice on the pain of eternal damnation. But yet evident it is, that they are all of them contrary unto the common Senſe, Reaſon and Experience of all Chriſtians, all that believe the Goſpel, as well as directly contradictory unto the Scripture and Example of the Primitive Church. It is therefore left unto the Judgment of all ſober Perſons, ſuch as are not yet made drunk with the Cup of their Abominations to determine whether any thing, but either

either profound Ignorance and ſpiritual Darkneſs, or love of Sin, with a deſire to live ſecurely therein, or ſecular Intereſts, or an hardening Judgment for the abuſe of the Truth, or a concurrence of all them, can prevail with men to make an entire abſolute Reſignation of their ſouls, and all their eternal concernments unto the conduct of this *pretended Guide*.

Fourthly, The *Way* for the attaining the Knowledge of the Truth propoſed by this Guide, is oppoſite unto the Way and Means preſcribed by God himſelf unto that end. It is ſo whether we reſpect the *internal Qualifications* of our minds, or the *Duties* that he preſcribeth, or the *Aid* that he promiſeth thereunto. For as unto the firſt, he requireth that thoſe who would learn the Truth, ought to be *meek*, and *lowly*, and humble, for ſuch alone he will teach, *Pſal.* 25. 8, 9, 14. *Joh.* 6. 45. and if we are not taught of God, we learn nothing as we ought, or not unto any purpoſe; that they caſt out all *wickedneſs, and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs*, that ſo they may receive the ingrafted Word with meekneſs, *Jam.* 1. 21. Without theſe things, they may be alwaies learning, but ſhall never come unto the Knowledge of the Truth. And as unto Means and Duties, two things he enjoyns and indiſpenſibly requires of us in order unto this end. (1.) That we *ſtudy the Word* continually; that we meditate upon it, and place our delight in it, *Joh.* 1. 8. *Deut.* 6. 7. *Pſal.* 1. 2. *Iſa.* 8. 20. *Joh* 5. 30. 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16, 17. *Pſal.* 119. 18. *Joh.* 16. 13. 1 *Joh.* 2. 20. (2.) Fervent and diligent Prayer, that we may be lead into, and preſerved in the Truth, that we may be enabled to receive it, and hold it faſt againſt Temptations and Oppoſitions. For our Aid and Aſſiſtance herein, he commands us to wait for it, and expect the *Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation*, to open our eyes, to bring us unto the full Aſſurance of Underſtanding, or to lead us into all Truth. Of theſe things, of the neceſſity of them unto the due Knowledge of the Truth, we hear nothing from this *pretended Guide*. She knows well enough

that to put the Minds of men into theſe Waies, and the uſe of theſe Means, whereby they may be taught of God, and *learn the Truth as it is in Jeſus*, is to looſe them from her ſelf for ever. Howbeit they are the only Waies and Means preſcribed and bleſſed of God unto this end, with thoſe other eſpecial Duties which belong unto them.

They will ſay, it may be, that they do inſtruct their Converts in theſe things, and preſs them withal unto higher Acts of Devotion and Mortification than others do. But there are two things which deprive them of any advantage by this pretence. For (1.) We ſee and know of what ſort for the moſt part their Converts are. I ſhall not give that character of them in words, which generally they give of themſelves in their works; for I have nothing to do with the Perſons of men. And I ſhould rejoyce to ſee them give a better evidence of being inſtructed in theſe things, than as yet they have done. But (2.) Whatever of this nature they propoſe and preſcribe unto them, it is not unto this end, that they may learn and know the Truth. They require no more of any hereunto, but that on their ſophiſtical and frivolous pretences, he give up himſelf unto their Guidance, or ſubmit himſelf unto the Authority of the *Pope*. For hereby he formally becomes a member of the Catholick Church, whoſe Faith, whether he know it or no, immediately becomes his; and for particulars he muſt wait for the Prieſts information, as occaſion ſhall require.

This is I confeſs their great advantage in this World. The way they propoſe to attain the Knowledge of the Truth, is eaſy, conſiſtent with the luſts of men, expoſed equally to the wiſe and fooliſh, to the ſober and intemperate, puts men out of all doubts, giving them all the quiet aſſurance which deceit and falſehood can communicate.

The way of God unto the ſame end is difficult unto fleſh and blood, deſtructive unto the luſts of the fleſh & of the mind, requi-

requiring Diligence, Humility and Watchfulneſs in the Exerciſe of Grace all our Daies, which things few are pleaſed withal. Yet is this Way of God ſo ſuited unto the Nature of Religon, ſo becoming the importance of this Duty, ſo effectual not only unto the attainment of the Knowledge of Truth, but unto all the ends of it in the Life of God; is ſo neceſſary on the account of the Infinite Greatneſs and Holineſs of God, with the Nature of Divine Revelations, as that no man, who is not blinded with prejudices and corrupt Affections, can decline it, to embrace the other.

There are other things yet, if it be poſſible, of an higher Abomination, to deter all ſober Perſons from touching with this Guide, than thoſe already inſiſted on. And ſuch they are, as the preſent contrivances and practices of our adverſaries, do unavoidably compel us to plead in this cauſe, and are in themſelves ſufficient for ever to diveſt that Church of this *great and gainful pretence*, of being the only Guide of all men in Religion. For,

Fifthly; Conſider what it is, wherein they inſtruct many of them who betake themſelves unto their Conduct and Guidance, I mean of the Agents for and in the name of the *Church of Rome*. The firſt thing which they labour to fix on their mindes and conſciences, is abſolute Obedience unto their *immediate Guides*, with a blind belief of what they propoſe unto them. And this they prevail on them unto, by aſſuming a twofold Authority unto themſelves. And the firſt is that of *forgiving them all their ſins*, though againſt the light of Nature, and of their own conſciences, which they confeſs unto them; and this confeſſion they are obliged unto under pain of Damnation. Some things indeed they do require of them, in order unto a participation of Prieſtly abſolution. But they are all in the Power of the Prieſt to preſcribe, decline, or accept; which latter they will not be uneaſy unto, when it conduceth unto their advantage. The iſſue is, that in this pardon of their ſins,

the

the ſouls of men may as ſafely acquieſce, as if they were immediately pardoned by Chriſt himſelf. And if they have occaſion for the advantage of the *Catholick Cauſe*, to put them on things that are openly ſinful, as Murder and Sedition, either by vertue of the Direction, Guidance and Commands of the Prieſts, they looſe their Nature and become no ſins at all, or they are ſo *aſſured of pardon*, as puts them in their conſciences, into as good a ſtate and condition as if they had not ſinned. And (2.) They aſſume unto themſelves an Authority to grant eſpecial Priviledges and Rewards in Heaven and Earth, to the doing of what they command or require, whatever it be. As unto the Earth, ſo many Prayers, ſo many Maſſes ſhall be aſſigned unto their advantage; and in ſome caſes *Canoninozation* with all the glorious Priviledges of it. And as unto Heaven what they ſo do, ſhall have ſuch a proportion of merit, as ſhall exalt them unto the ſecond, third, or fourth place of precedency and honour therein, among all the Holy Martyrs. It is uncredible what Power and Dominion over the conſciences of their Proſelytes, they obtain by theſe means, with other artifices of the like Nanture. Hence many of them know of no other dependance on any as unto preſent Peace, and eternal Bleſſedneſs, than that on the Prieſts alone.

Woful Practices do follow on theſe Principles. For the minds of men being thus prepared, they diſpoſe of them unto ſuch occaſions or ſervices for the Intereſt of the *Catholick Cauſe*, as their own Nature, Inclinations, the fierceneſs or ſoftneſs of their tempers, their outward Greatneſs, Power and Wealth, or their Straights, Wants and Neceſſities, render them meet unto For now they are ready for ſuch things, which if they had not relinquiſhed the care and charge of their own ſouls, if they had not abſolutely reſigned them unto others; they would never have entertained a thought of, without deteſtation and abhorrency. Poor deluded creatures, who could ſufficiently bewail their condition, but that for the moſt part

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through the Love of ſin and the wages of it, they chuſe theſe deluſions. Some now ſhall fire Cities; ſome ſhall murther innocent Perſons; ſome ſhall aſſaſſinate Kings and Potentates; ſome ſhall creep into houſes and lead captive ſilly women, laden with ſins, lead about with divers luſts; and ſome ſhall proſtitute themſelves unto the carnal Luſts and Pleaſures of others; all as they judge conducing unto the *Catholick Cauſe* and their own Intreſt therein. Theſe are they who muſt anſwer not only for the blood of them that are murdered, but of their murderers alſo. I heartily wiſh theſe things were not ſo; that they never had been ſo; but being ſo, it is well that they are known ſo to be; and that they are written in ſuch legible characters in moſt Nations of *Europe*, eſpecially in this wherein we live, as that he who runs may read them. I ſhall not deſcend unto particular Inſtances; every ones mind and thoughts will ſuggeſt them unto them; or they may learn them in *Weſtminſter Hall.*

It will be ſaid, that on a ſuppoſition that theſe things are ſo, yet this is the crime of but a *few*, it may be of a few *Jeſuites*; which others, eſpecially the Church, is not concerned in. They are but a *few* who teach and inſtruct their Converts unto ſuch purpoſes; but a *few* that are poſſeſſed with thoſe Maxims and Principles which lead unto theſe Practices. Notwithſtanding their miſcarriages, the Church it ſelf may be a Safe Guide unto the ſouls of men.

I anſwer two things; (1.) That thoſe who have theſe Principles, who teach theſe Practices, are all of them appointed unto their Office and Work, impoſed on the conſciences of men as their only Guides, by the *Authority of the Church* it ſelf. No Caution is given by it againſt them; no Rule preſcribed whereby they may know them; but they come all armed with the Authority of the Church, and as ſuch are received by their credulous followers. The whole therefore of what they do, may juſtly be aſcribed unto the Church it ſelf. (2.) It may be made to appear, that for about an hundred and fifty

fifty years paſt, no Plot, no Deſign hath been conceived or perpetrated, wherein Kings, Princes, private Perſons were to be murdered or deſtroyed, wherein Nations were to be embroyled in blood and confuſion, in order unto the promotion of the *Catholick Cauſe*, but the *Church it ſelf* was either the Contriver or Approver of it. Who approved of the murder of the two Kings in *France*, one after another? of the *Maſſacre* there of an hundred thouſand Proteſtants? who deſigned and bleſſed all preparations for the murder of *Queen Elizabth*; with the unjuſt Invaſion of the Nation in 88? who bleſſed and protected what in them lay the *horrible Maſſacre of Ireland*; with the ſlaughters that have been made in other places on the ſame Principles? was it a few *Jeſuites* only? was it not the Church it ſelf in its Head the *Pope*, and its Horns the *Cardinals* at *Rome*?

Wherefore although it ſeem good unto *this Church* to aſſume unto it ſelf the ſole Conduct of the ſouls of all men in the matters of Religion, which hath thrived in its hands unto an *incredible Grandeur*, in Dominion, Power and Wealth; yet other men of an ordinary wiſdom and capacity, who are not yet taken alive by them at their pleaſure, will be ready to judge (eſpecially now the Cave of *Cacus* is opened) that it is neceſſary for them to take more care of their own ſouls.

Some will ſay, that all theſe things, Principles and Practices, are *ſeparable* from their Religion, and that they will take ſufficient heed unto themſelves, that they give admittance unto none of them, eſpecially ſuch as are againſt the Light of Nature, and the known Rules of common Honeſty. Both the *Goodneſs* of their own natural temper, and the *Principles of Morality*, which they will never part withal, will give them and others ſecurity herein.

God forbid I ſhould ever charge any Perſons with any thing that is *Criminal*, whereof they are not, or may not be eaſily convicted. Thoſe who make theſe Profeſſions ſhall paſs with me at the rate and upon the credit of their Profeſſions.

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As ſhall all men in this World, untill they contradict and diſprove themſelves by their Actions. But even ſuch Perſons had need be very careful that they are not deceived herein. The Reſignation which they are to make of themſelves and their Conſciences unto the conduct of this Church, doth quite change both their *Light* and *Rule*; for it includes a Renunciation of all Principles and Perſwaſions in things Divine and Moral, that do or may in the leaſt interfere with that Conduct. It is true, that neither that Church nor any elſe, can change the Nature of things Moral in themſelves; for although they may call Good, Evil, and Evil, Good; Light, Darkneſs, and Darkneſs, Light; yet they cannot make that which is Good, Evil; nor that which is Evil, Good; but they may make a *falſe Repreſentation* of the one and other unto the minds of men. Hence what was Evil unto them antecedently unto this Reſignation of themſelves, as the Fireing of Cities, the Murther of Innocent Perſons, the Overthrow of Governments and Nations for their own Ends, ſhall be impoſed on them by this pretended *Infallible Guide*, as things Good and Meritorious with reference unto their *Catholick* Ends. Theſe are the two moſt pernicious Divices in all their Superſtition. 1. That the Conſciences of men are exempted and taken off from an *Immediate Dependance* on and *Subjection* unto the Authority of Chriſt, and put in immediate Subjection unto the *Prieſts*; ſeeing he neither promiſeth any thing unto them, nor commands any thing but by the Church. 2. That their Commands, becauſe they are theirs, do regulate their Conſciences even as unto Moral Good or Evil. Nor is it ſafe for theſe men to truſt too much unto the *Goodneſs of their own Natures*, nor it may be unto others, who are concerned in what they ſhall do. For as it is the Glory of the Doctrine and Grace of the Goſpel, to change the *Wolf, the Lion, and the Leopard*, *Iſa.* 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. Perſons of the Fierceſt and moſt Violent Inclinations, unto

quiet Aſſociates of *Lambs and Children*; ſo it is to be feared from many inſtances, that by Vertue of their Conduct, they can change appearing *Sheep* at leaſt, as unto their natural Tempers, into that which is Violent, Bloody, and Poyſonous.

6. Under pretence of being this Guide, and to impoſe their Pretenſions thereunto on the Minds and Conſciences of men, this Church *hath filled moſt Nations of Europe with Blood and Slaughter*; making horrible Devaſtations of innumerable Perſons, both fearing God and living Peaceably in the World. Ten times more Blood of Chriſtians hath been ſhed by them unto this End, than was ſhed in all the Primitive Pagan Perſecutions. All that Diſſent from them may ſay,

Quæ Regio in terris noſtri non plena cruoris?

Is there any Nation in *Europe* that is not filled with our Bloud? The Laſt Day alone can diſcover the Blood that hath been ſhed ſecretly or with little noiſe by the *Inquiſition*, in the *Spaniſh*, and ſome of the *Italian* Territories. *England*, *France*, *Germany*, *Flanders*, *Holland*, *Ireland*, can ſpeak for themſelves, in the Cruelties which unto this End have been executed in them. The ſole Reaſon of all this Inhumane Violence, hath been, that men would not ſubmit their Souls and Conſciences unto that Abſolute Power over them and Conduct of them, which their Church claimeth unto it ſelf.

And it is moſt Probable that their *Abſolute Conduct* is of the ſame Nature with the Ways and Means whereby they do Attempt it, or have Obtained it. When men by Force and Fraud, Blood and Slaughters, do endeavour to impoſe their *Rule* upon us, we are not to expect but that the *Rule* will be anſwerable unto the Means that are uſed for the Attaining it.

it. As in the firſt Planting and Propagation of Chriſtian Religion, the Way and Means of them were *Spiritual Light*, and the evident Exerciſe of all Graces, eſpecially Meekneſs, Humility, Patience in Sufferings and Contempt of the World. Hereon men had juſt Grounds to Believe and Expect, that the *Conduct* which they were Invited and Called unto, under the rule of Chriſt, would be of the ſame Nature, Meek, Holy, Juſt and Good; whereof by Experience they found full Aſſurance. So where the Rule of our Souls and Conſciences is attempted and carried on by Violence, Blood, Cruelty, and Deſolation of Nations, we have juſt Ground to believe, that if thoſe who uſe them do prevail therein, their Leading and Rule will be of the ſame Nature.

It is but Reaſonable therefore for any man before he make choice of this Guide, to ask of himſelf or others, theſe few Queſtions. Is there any thing in the Goſpel which gives countenance unto this way of impoſing a Guide in *Religion* on the Minds and Conſciences of men? Was there any thing like it in the *Practices* of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his Apoſtles, or the Primitive Churches? Doth this way make a juſt *Repreſentation* of the Spirit, the Meekneſs, the Holineſs, the Love, the Patience of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? Is it conſiſtent with the *Genius* of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, the Religion taught therein, as unto its Nature and Ends, concerning our Deportment in this World, and our Tendency unto another? Can any man think without *Horror*, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be the Authour of this way; that he hath appointed that all men ſhould be Starved, or Hanged, or Burned, or otherwiſe Slaughtered, who would not Submit unto this Doctrine or Rule of this or any Church, as ſome of the worſt of men ſhall pleaſe to ſtate them? Is not this that which among other things gives us Aſſurance, that the Doctrine and Superſtition of *Mahomet* were from Hell, from the *Old Murderer*; in that it is a prime Dictate of them, that thoſe

who will not Submit unto them are to be deſtroyed with Fire and Sword? By that time a man hath a little weighed theſe Enquiries, with ſuch other of the ſame Nature that may be added unto them: if he be not forſaken of all ſenſe of the Glory of Chriſt, of the Honour of the Goſpel, of the Reputation of Chriſtian Religion, and all care of the Salvation of his own Soul, he will make a long ſtand before he give up himſelf Abſolutely unto the Conduct of this Church.

7. I cannot but mention in the next place, that which becauſe it is commonly pleaded, I ſhall but mention. And this is, that many *important Principles* and *Practices* of the Religion which this pretended Guide would impoſe upon us, are evidently ſuited unto the Carnal Intereſts and Luſts of them who have the Conduct of it. Such are *Purgatory*, *Papal Pardons*, *Sacrifices for the Dead*, *Auricular Confeſſion*, with *Prieſtly Abſolution* thereon; Many have already declared how the Notion and Superſtition of theſe things, did both raiſe and do maintain their Revenues; and are otherwiſe made uſe of to make Proviſion for the Fleſh to fulfill it in the Luſts thereof. And there lyeth no Encouragement herein to ingage Wiſe men to give up themſelves unto its Conduct. But,

8. Conſiderate men will be afraid of that conduct under which Chriſtian Religion hath *loſt all its native Beauty*, *Simplicity*, *ſpiritual Glory* and *Power*. How are theſe things repreſented unto us in the Goſpel? How were they exemplified unto us in the lives of the Apoſtles and of all the ſincere primitive converts; The Church was through them, *a new Heaven and a new Earth*, *wherein dwelt Righteouſneſs*. The whole of Religion as it was at firſt profeſſed, was nothing but a Repreſentation of the Wiſdom, Truth, Holineſs, Love and Compaſſion of Chriſt; an evident and glorious means to recover mankind from its Apoſtacy from God, and to reintroduce

introduce his Image on the Soules of men; a bleſſed way continually to exerciſe the Power of Love, Goodneſs, Charity, Bounty, Zeal, and Delight in God; a Teſtimony given unto the Truth, Reality and ſubſtance of things ſpiritual, inviſible and eternal, with their preference above all earthly things. Under *their conduct* is this Beauty, this Glory of Chriſtian Religion loſt and defaced. Wee may ſay with the Prophet of old; *how is the faithfull City become an Harlot, Righteouſneſs lodged in it but now Murderers. Iſa.* 1. 21. The Church is the *Temple of God*; could we have looked into it of old, wee might by faith have ſeen *Chriſt ſitting on his Throne*, the train of his Light, Holineſs, Love and grace filling the whole Temple. Look into it under their conduct, and there is the dreadful Appearance of the *Lawleſs Perſon, the man of ſin*, ſitting in the Temple of God, ſhewing himſelf to be God, to our Horror and Amazement. Look into the Primitive Aſſemblyes of Chriſtians, 2. *Cor.* 3. 8, 9, 10. you ſhall ſee Meekneſs, Humility, and the glorious Miniſtration of the Spirit in outward Simplicity. Look into thoſe of this Guide, and you ſhall ſee them like the *Houſe of Micah, Judg.* 17. 5. an *Houſe of Gods*, with *Molten Images, graven Images, Ephods and Teraphims*, multiplyed Inſtruments of Superſtition and Idolatry. Look on their Converſation of old in the World; and it was *humble, peaceable, uſeful*, profitable unto Mankind, with a contempt of earthly things in compariſon of thoſe that are eternal. But under the conduct of this Guide; Ambition, Pride, Senſuality and profaneſs, have covered the nations of its Communion; In all things have they loſt and defaced the native Beauty and Glory of Chriſtian Religion. It will be of no advantage unto any, voluntarily to come in into a participation in this woefull Apoſtacy.

9. The *Inſupportable Yoke* that this Guide puts *on Kings* and *Soveraign Princes*, on pretence of its divine Right of an univerſal Guidance of them and all their Subjects, deſerves the

the Conſideration of them that are concerned, before they give up themſelves unto it. It is true that by and ſince the *Reformation*, as this Power of theſe men who call themſelves *this Guide*, hath been utterly caſt of by many; So in thoſe places where on other accounts they maintain their Intereſt, it hath been greatly weakened and impared. Hence thoſe of the greateſt Power in the Nations of *Europe*, have had little regard unto their Authority unleſs it be uſed unto their Intereſt and Advantage. But their Principles are ſtill the ſame as they were; their Pretence of Divine Right the ſame that it was, and their deſires after the exerciſe of it unto their own ends, not at all abated. Could they once again enthrone themſelves in the conſciences of Kings themſelves and all their Subjects; Could they deſtroy the Ballance of a contrary Intreſt; could they take away the Reſerves of Reliefs againſt their encroachments, by engaging the Aſſiſtance of Subjects againſt their Princes, of one Prince againſt another, as in former dayes; there is no reaſon to think but that they would return unto their *former uſurpations* and inſolency. And wiſe men, yea Princes themſelves, may be deceived, if they take their meaſures of the *nature of the Papacy*, with reſpect unto Civil Government, from its preſent deportment and Attempts, though bad enough. Take away the perplexities and Difficulties they are caſt into, through the Rejection of their Authority by ſo many nations, and by the divided Intreſts of Kings and Potentates thereon; *heal their deadly wound*, and reſtore them unto a *Catholick* Power over the conſciences of all ſorts of men, by the deſtruction of them by whom it is oppoſed, and it will quickly appear with another aſpect on the world, another manner of influence on the Governours and Governments of Kingdoms and Nations then now it doth. But the conſideration hereof belongs principally unto them, who are not wont to be unconcerned in the Preſervation of their juſt Authority. Yet if occaſion require

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it, a demonſtration ſhall be given of the neceſſary and unavoidable conſequences of the Readmiſſion of the *Papal Power*, in any of the Nations of *Europe* who have caſt it out; and that with reſpect unto the Governours and Governments of them.

Among many other conſiderations, which offer themſelves unto the ſame Purpoſe, and which ſhall be produced, if occaſion is given; I ſhall add one more and cloſe this Diſcourſe; And this is, that the *foundation of all the Religious worſhip*, which this Guide directs unto, whence all other parts of it do proceed, and whereon they do depend, conſiſts of the overthrow of one of the principle Articles of the Chriſtian faith. And this is, that *our Lord Jeſus hath by one offering, for ever perfected them that are ſanctified*; as it is expreſſed by the Apoſtle; *Heb.* 10. 14. In direct oppoſition hereunto, the Ground and Reaſon of their *Maſs* and the Sacrifice therein, which is the Life, Soul, Centor, and Foundation of all their Religious worſhip, lyes in this, *that there is a Neceſſity that Chriſt be offered often*, yea every day, in places innumerable, without which, they ſay, the Church can neither be *Sanctified or perfected.* Such a Guide is this Church, as that it lays the foundation of all its ſacred worſhip in the overthrow of the principal foundation of the Chriſtian faith.

God in his appointed time, will put an end unto all theſe extravagancies, exceſſes and diſtractions in his Church; *when Violence ſhall be no more heard in her Land, Waſting nor Diſtruction within her Borders, when ſhe ſhall call her Walls Salvation and her Gates Praiſe.*

FINIS.